

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 USIA-06
TRSE-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 PM-04 MC-02 /037 W
-----140610Z 126352 /21

R 121322Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1717

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: MILI, AU

SUBJECT: FRANZ SARNITZ, VIENNA

REF: STATE 76689

1. EMBASSY EDO AND INVESTIGATOR CALLED ON DIRECTOR FRANZ SARNITZ OF SUBJECT FIRM APRIL 15, 1977, FOR CLARIFICATION OF REFERENCE TRANSACTION.

2. SARNITZ ESTIMATED THAT ORDER CITED IN REFTEL WILL MEET

AUSTRIAN DEMAND FOR ONLY APPROXIMATELY 5 MONTHS. HIS FORECAST FOR ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS BY HIS FIRM OF HAND GUNS OF ALL CALIBERS FROM SMITH AND WESSON WAS 2,000 PIECES. TOTAL ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPORTING HAND GUNS IN AUSTRIA CURRENTLY ESTIMATED BY SARNITZ BETWEEN 5,000 (ABSOLUTE MINIMUM) AND 10,000 PIECES, PER SARNITZ, THERE IS DISTINCT TREND EVIDENT IN AUSTRIA TOWARD PURCHASE OF LARGE CALIBER HAND GUNS FOR SELF DEFENSE DUE TO RECENT TERRORIST AND VIOLENT CRIME PUBLICITY AND LIBERAL AUSTRIAN GUN LAWS.

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2. ALSO, PER SARNITZ, DUE TO RECENT DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING U.S. ORIGIN HAND GUNS, AUSTRIA HAS HAD TO

MEET AT LEAST SOME OF LOCAL REQUIREMENTS FROM EUROPEAN SOURCES (INCLUDING EASTERN EUROPE) BUT WOULD PREFER PROCURE U.S. BRANDS. SO-CALLED "GRAY-MARKET"

(SMALL-SCALE SMUGGLING OF ARMS FROM ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA) HAS ALSO FLOURISHED. WITH THE RESUMPTION OF SUPPLIES FROM U.S. SARNITZ BELIEVES BOTH ABOVE-CITED SOURCES OF HAND GUNS WILL DECREASE. TO SERVICE AND REPAIR SMITH AND WESSON HAND GUNS IN AUSTRIA, SARNITZ HAS NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT WITH SMITH AND WESSON TO ESTABLISH S&W WARRANTY REPAIR FACILITY IN VIENNA.

4. SARNITZ AGAIN PROVIDED RESASSURANCES THAT HIS FIRM HAS NO INTENTION OF RE-EXPORTING U.S. ORIGIN HAND GUNS AND IS FULLY OCCUPIED WITH IN-COUNTRY MARKET DEMANDS. SARNITZ VOLUNTEERED THAT EARLIER RE-EXPORT INFRACTION WAS SMALL ABERRATION RESULTING FROM PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICAN DEALER AND WOULD NOT REOCCUR

SINCE HE AND FIRM NOW AWARE OF SERIOUSNESS TOO
USG OF RE-EXPORT REGULATIONS, OPPOSED TO AUSTRIAN
AUTHORITIES' MORE CASUAL CONTROLS.

5. EMBASSY INQUIRIES WITH AUSTRIAN MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR PROVIDED UNOFFICIAL BUT RELIABLE CONFIRMATION
OF SARNITZ' ESTIMATES WITH ERROR POSSIBLY ON CONSERVATIVE
SIDE. EMBASSY THEREFORE SATISFIED THAT SARNITZ
FIRM HAS VALID NEED FOR HAND GUNS CITED REFTEL TO
MEET LOCAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDS ISSUANCE OF
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REF LICENSE. MEEHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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